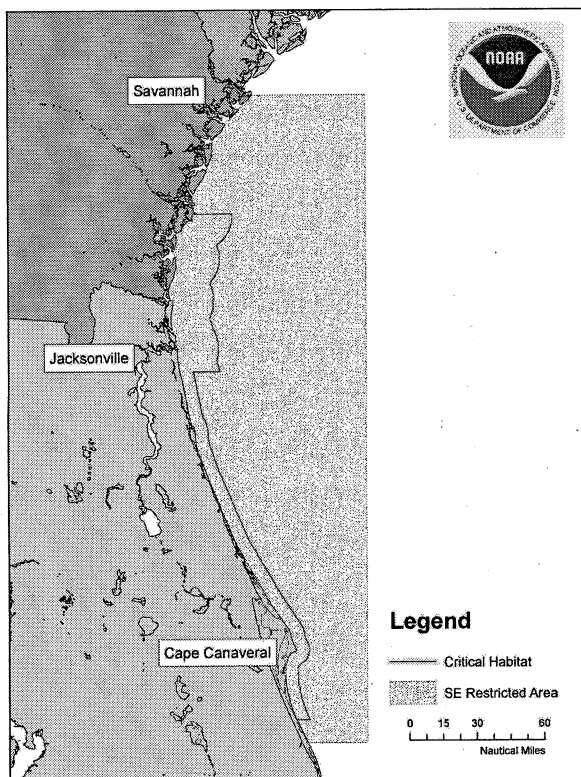


**THE NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE (NMFS) ANNOUNCES
TEMPORARY RULE TO PROHIBIT GILLNET FISHING OFF GEORGIA AND
NORTHEAST FLORIDA COASTS IN ORDER TO PROTECT THE NORTH
ATLANTIC RIGHT WHALE**

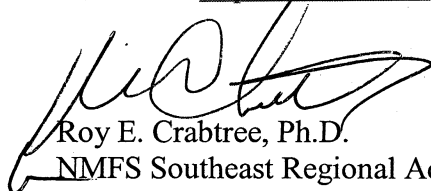
The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) announces a temporary rule to prohibit, through March 31, 2006, any vessel from fishing with any gillnet gear in the Atlantic Ocean waters between 32°00' N. lat. (near Savannah, GA) and 27°51' N. lat. (near Sebastian Inlet, FL) and

extending from the shore eastward out to 80°00' W. long under the authority of the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan (ALWTRP) (50 CFR 229.32 (g)) and the Endangered Species Act. NMFS is taking this action based on its determination that a right whale mortality, documented on January 22, 2006, was the result of an entanglement by gillnet gear within the Southeast U.S. Restricted Area. This action is necessary to protect North Atlantic right whales from further serious injury or mortality in the Southeast U.S. Restricted Area due to entanglement in gillnet gear.



This authorization is effective beginning 12:01 a.m. on February 15, 2006, until 11:59 p.m. on March 31, 2006, in the Atlantic Ocean waters between 32°00' N. lat. (near Savannah, GA) and 27°51' N. lat. (near Sebastian Inlet, FL) and extending from the shore eastward out to 80°00' W. long.

This FAX notice is a courtesy to HMS fishery participants to help keep you informed about your fishery. Official notice of Federal fishing actions is made through filing such notice with the Office of Federal Register. For further information on this temporary rule, contact Vicki Cornish, 727-824-5312, Juan Levesque, 727-824-5312, or Barb Zoodsma, 904-321-2806. Copies of the temporary rule and Environmental Assessment prepared in association with this temporary rule may be obtained upon request from the NMFS Southeast Regional Office, Protected Resources Division, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33701. The regulations and background documents for the ALWTRP can be downloaded from the ALWTRP web site at <http://www.nero.noaa.gov/whaletrp/>.


Roy E. Crabtree, Ph.D.
NMFS Southeast Regional Administrator

February 14, 2006